

History: The 100-acre Henry Sargent Hunnewell Memorial Town Forest was a gift to the town by his widow, Mary Bowditch (Whitney) Hunnewell in 1933. The Forest was part of the last large tract of Indian owned land in Natick, and had been in the Hunnewell family for over 100 years. In 1955, a Natick Natural Science Park was created in the Town Forest as a place to bring young students to the natural world. Directed by Walter Gleason, principal of Lilja School, the innovative program remained active for nearly ten years. Vestiges remain in the forest — a “North Star finder”, a giant sundial, a monthly calendar box, as well as man-made changes to the forest. A pamphlet about it is in the Natick Local History vertical file of the Morse Institute Library.

The natural environment: The entrance from Oak Street is 200 feet lower than the 322 feet height of Pleasant Hill, where the large Natick water tank is located. This fact, plus the steep northeast slope of Pleasant Hill, has created an environment that encourages a wide variety of wildlife and plants - from waterfowl (ducks, geese, swans) in the pond to forest loving birds in the tall trees on the hillside and the occasional red tail hawk soaring above the hill; otters and muskrats along the water to squirrels in the forest; and cat-o-nine tails and red (swamp) maples along the wetlands to mature white pine and eastern hemlock on the slopes.

At the end of the entrance road from Oak Street, a left turn takes you to a field which was a playground in the 1950s. Now you can see nature taking back the open area. The wide trails around the hill may have been constructed as logging (skidder) trails for forestry management, as well as walking trails. Although not maintained for over fifty years, there is relatively little erosion on the main trails. Please do not use the steeper “short cut” paths — they only contribute to erosion.

- Pleasant Hill is a “Drumlin,” a rounded hill like a whale’s back, formed by a glacier about 10,000 years ago.
- Near the water tank on top of the hill, look for the Natick Natural Science Park astronomy devices.
- The original bronze marker establishing the Hunnewell Town Forest is on a boulder on the north edge of the forest, next to Route 9.
- Off the south boundary of the Town Forest, you can still see the roadbed for the 1890s trolley line from Route 9 to Natick center. Please respect private property.

Public Safety & Access Information

Safety Tips:

- This trail system has portions that are flat and portions that are very steep. Flat portions are marked in yellow and start at Oak Street.
- If possible, walk with someone you know.
- Always know where you are and let someone know where you are walking.
- Carry a whistle or loud horn and cell phone.
- Don’t walk in the dark, trails are for daylight use only.

Parking

Off-street parking is available at the Oak St entrance and the Bacon Street Farm on Bacon St.

Dog Owners

Keep dogs on leash. Pick up after your dog. It’s the law.

Health Tips

- Consult your physician before strenuous exercise.
- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes that provide support.
- Eat and drink an hour before walking; bring water.
- Use the restroom before walking.
- Rest when you are tired.
- Use insect repellent and/or long pants and a hat to avoid ticks.
- Watch for poison ivy along many of the trails (Leaves of three, let them be).

Please Note

- All public parks and trails in Natick are drug and alcohol free
- No motorized vehicles
- No weapons.
- No fireworks.
- No glass containers.
- No littering
- No smoking
- No fires

NATICK TRAILS

Hunnewell Town Forest

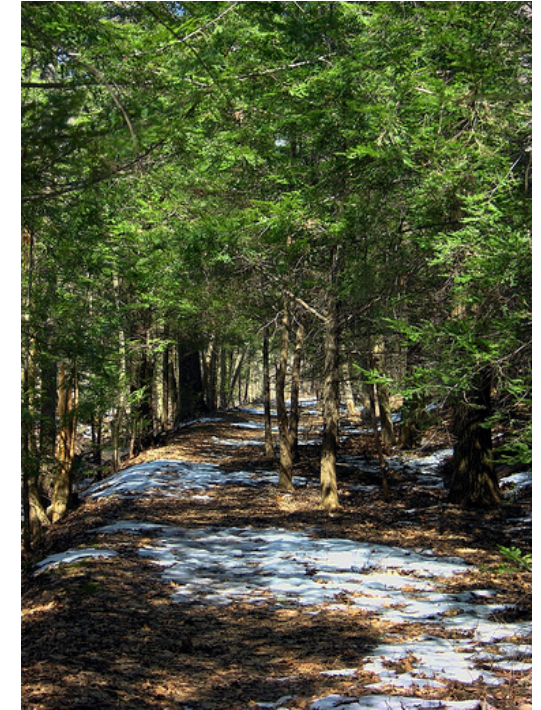
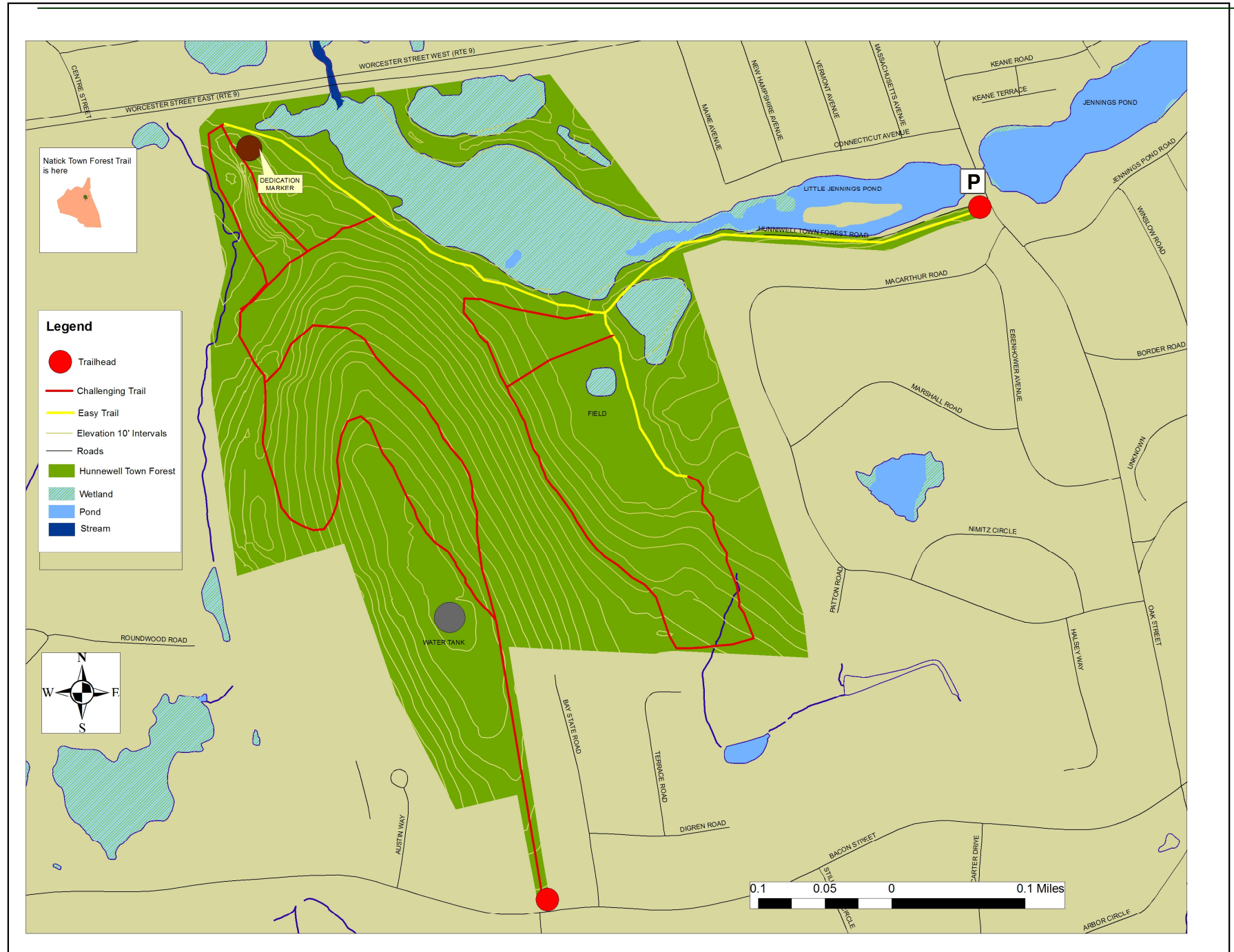


Photo courtesy of Chris Wilder-Smith

Town of Natick
13 E. Central St
Natick, MA 01760
508-647-6450

Natick Open Space Advisory Committee
Natick Conservation Commission
Natick Planning Board
Natick Walks

Hunnewell Town Forest Trails



DISCLAIMER: The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation or conveyancing purposes.